

# Interview With A Tester

**Location**

- Soderkulla, Finland
- Asäkeskus, Helsinki, Finland

**Contact**

- sami.soderblom@sok.fi
- sami@happymonkey.eu
- sami.soderblom@gmail.com
- +358 50 513 7794

**Social media**

- Twitter
- Blog (Old one, New(er) one)

**Work**

- SOK (Papa Bear of QA)
- Software Testing Finland
- Happy Monkey
- Cofounder
- 31 yrs in work
- 18 years in testing / quality advocacy
- 20+ business domains
- 40+ projects
- 1000+ trained/coached souls

**Life**

- Family: Malin (Wife), Vilja (Kids), Max (Kids)
- Cats: Laku, Ollie
- Dear old ones: Hontai, Yoshin, Ruy, jujutsu, Brazilian JiuJitsu
- Hobbies: Disc golf, Gym, Whiskies, Watches, Nano music

Sami Soderblom — **Your pilot today**

**Before the interview**

**Preparation**

- Signup for a product demo
- Study the product and the material on it (videos, articles, claims, open sourced documentation on architecture, APIs, etc.)
- Follow the company people (blogs, LinkedIn posts, etc.)
- Come up with an approach on how to test the company product, have an insight on important quality dimensions, user/customer needs, etc.
- Test the company product and report.

**IMPACT!**

**Approach**

- Direct approach: Call, Email, DM
- Application:
  - For specific role: Preferably tailored application. Show interest on the role and explain why you should be the one selected for it. NO generic applications to these. If you're not serious about this specific role, it's hard to take you seriously and consider you for the role, or any upcoming role either.
  - Open: Tell what you want to be and do, your vision, what is your way of working, little bit about your personality, internal reflection, etc. If that resonates with the company you're applying to, you're golden. Be careful what you wish for. You might just get it. :)

**Expectation management**

- Team consist of DIFFERENT people, who work well together. Sometimes this and homogeneity of the team has to be challenged and if done well, the team will love you. <3
- Team needs: The company has expectations. Do you meet these?
- Character & personality: Sami expect people to ask, if and when they don't know. For example, if you don't know what are company's/Sami's expectations towards you, ask! :)
- You have expectations. Does the company meet them?
- A company, boss, team, etc. has a problem. Would hiring you solve it?
- Have all relevant expectations by all relevant stakeholders been mapped? Are we asking the right questions?

**Retention**

- Hiring to keep. If people leave after a short while, there's something wrong in the recruitment process.
- 17 Surprising Statistics about Employee Retention by TINYpulse

**Notes & ideas**

- MoT discussion forum
- Hot topic
- Should it be openly put in the ad?
- Should it be the same with everyone?
- Salary: Come up with your own price. This is the best place to set your compensation, incl. salary.
- How much should it be?
- Scenarios:
  - You want 5000 EUR/month. Tell the boss that you have gotten 4500 EUR/month (even if it's not true) and you want salary progression.
  - You want 5000 EUR/month. You notice that the boss is of haggling type. Tell the boss that you have gotten 5500 EUR/month (even if it's not true).
- Be careful though. Smart people know these things also on the other side of the table. :)
- Communication: Negotiation
- Models/techniques: Note: You can learn all kinds of techniques and models, but if they don't come naturally when meeting with the boss or team, people take you as a fake. And fakes rarely get hired.

**In the interview**

**From the employer to the candidate**

- Intro:
  - How did you become a tester/QA professional?
  - What are your (workplace) experiences in testing/QA?
- Testing knowledge/insight:
  - What is testing?
  - What is quality?
  - What is a bug?
  - What do you know about Exploratory Testing?
    - How do you manage/structure your and/or your team's exploration/investigation? (Session-Based Test Management? Charters? Touring? Kanban? Something else, what?)
    - How do you document your and/or your team's exploration/investigation?
    - How do you distinguish Exploratory Testing from Ad Hoc testing?
  - What do you know about:
    - Context-Driven Testing?
    - Rapid Software Testing?
    - Risk-Based Testing?
    - (A)TDD?
    - BDD?
  - How do you conduct testing in a team?
    - Pairing?
    - Mobbing?
    - Something else, what?
  - How much testing is enough?
  - How do you test in a Agile context?
    - Scrum? — Favourite style of retrospective?
    - Kanban? — What does your ideal Kanban board look like? — When do you get involved in Kanban workflow as a tester/QA professional?
  - How do you communicate the information and insight testing unravels?
- Tooling:
  - How do you decide when to use confirmatory/assertive testing and when explorative/investigative testing?
  - How do you decide what to automate and what to not automate?
  - What is your tooling experience?
    - Demo
    - Tooling/coding assignment
- Remaining relevant:
  - What is the last testing/QA related conference, meetup or other gettogether you attended?
  - Favourite testing book or blog?
  - How do you keep up with the industry?
  - Do you share your knowledge in social media or otherwise?
  - What is your learning process?
- Generic questions:
  - Have to be taken with a grain of salt, because generic questions often just scratch the surface. But they are used quite a lot nonetheless, so it wouldn't hurt to rehearse them and come up smart answers to them.

**From the candidate to the employer**

- Sometimes the questions you ask are more important than the answers you give. We are testers after all. :)

**After the interview**

- After this it's ok to initiate discussion. Before this it's ok and shows interest and initiative, but may come off as pushy.
- Ask for reply estimate, i.e. when the employer should contact you with result
- Next steps towards hiring
- Loss (or win) analysis

**What Sami looks in a candidate?**

- Attitude:
  - Quality and testing mentality
  - Continuous learning: It's dangerous to hire specific tool experts in times like these, because tools and tech come and go. Buzzwords come and go. The mentality for continuous learning helps to grasp new and relevant things quickly.
- Commitment
- Respect
- Values
- Competence
- Fit: Always also a team interview! You should meet the people you're working with, not only "the boss".
- Character & personality:
  - is the candidate here for the right reasons?
    - Money?
    - Title?
    - Purpose?
    - Company?
    - Team?
    - Product?
    - Other? What?
  - A\*\*hole coefficient:
    - Would I want to spend time with this person?
    - Would those I care about (the team and other coworkers)?
    - Even if anything else fails, be nice. That takes you places.